Amendment to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph that begins on page 2, line 8 as follows:

Many solutions have been proposed for transforming a Gaussian beam to a flat-top beam. Apparatuses and methods for accomplishing this are disclosed in Applicants' ~~co-pending~~ application 09/917,370 titled "System for converting optical beams to collimated flat-top beams" filed July 27, 2001, which issued as US Patent 6,654,183 on November 25, 2003, and in Applicants' US Patent 6,295,168 titled "Refractive optical beam that converts a laser beam to a collimated flat-top beam" issued September 25, 2001, both of which are hereby incorporated by reference. These references present designs that use aspheric optical elements to convert essentially all (99.7%) of the incident optical power of a non-uniform beam into a flat-top beam having greater than 70% of the optical power with less than 5% RMS (root mean square) variation. The edges of the reshaped beam are preferably rolled off in a controlled manner, thereby allowing the beam to propagate without the intensity aberrations that would otherwise arise from diffraction effects due to hard edges. Although the low dispersion glass (silica) used in these designs produces an intensity profile in the output pupil which is essentially uniform from wavelengths of 257 nm to greater than 1.5 microns, the combined dispersion of the two elements causes the output beam wavefront to converge or diverge (i.e., become uncollimated) as the wavelength varies from the nominal design value.